Passages in Spenser's poem (not to mention the pamphlet on Ireland) indeed seem to criticize that propensity in Elizabeth; but it takes work to see them as attacking an excessive rather than defective exercise of her authority. Burrow comes closest to finding that link in a passage where Arthur offers mercy to the fallen Pyrochles at the price of sworn obedience; but from there to Burrow's thesis that the poem expresses "a vehemently humiliated sense of despairing subjection to an almighty, pitiful power" (139) is still a double-bank shot at best. Burrow's political agenda becomes more credible later but never fully recovers from this tricky start. Evidentiary standards for connections between literature and politics are low these days, and Burrow's laxness is not entirely his own fault—though as it happens David Quint's *Epic and Empire*, appearing at about the same time and covering much of the same territory, shows what it takes to make such connections compelling. In any case, Burrow should not have worried about extending his reach; however obvious it may sound, writing literary history as the history of a feeling is not that common an endeavor, and when Burrow is on his game he gives a memorable example of how to do it.

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The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic. By Haun Saussy. Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993. 296 pp. $37.50.

Haun Saussy's title may lead nonspecialists to fear an exclusively sinological study, full of esoteric knowledge and ignoring issues that appeal to a broader readership. Such fears are unfounded, however, for *The Problem of a Chinese Aesthetic* is published in the "Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics" series, which includes books by Derrida, Lyotard, Jean-Luc Nancy and others, all dealing with important and wide-ranging issues. Saussy constructs an elaborate theoretical framework to connect the central chapters on the Chinese classic, the *Book of Odes*, with the beginning and ending chapters on the figure of China in Western philosophical writings. The issue is allegory, or whether allegory exists in Chinese writing. After connecting the debate about the translatability of Western terms like allegory with that on terminology in the time of Matteo Ricci and Leibniz, Saussy discusses the *Book of Odes* and its commentary tradition (often called allegorical), and finally Hegel's wrestling with China in his effort to write world history. Historical conditions have surely dictated Western philosophical discourse on China. Leibniz's reflections on the natural religion of the Chinese drew heavily on the writings of Jesuit missionaries in China, especially those of Matteo Ricci, and Hegel's conceptualization of China in his philosophical mapping of the world and world history also relied on contemporary sinological scholarship. In his brilliant discussions of Leibniz and Hegel, however, Saussy is not

concerned with the reliability of philosophy's source or the historical condition of the earlier contact between Chinese and Western cultures but with the theoretical problem of translatability and the challenge to find an adequate way to speak of China, to name China as the sign of a different culture that must somehow be related with the Western tradition. Translation goes beyond the translation of texts between languages, to that of "implicit systems of concepts" between cultures (1). For Leibniz, who is indebted to Ricci and his "accommodationist" approach to the conversion of China, translation is always possible. Whatever difference exists between Europe and China, Leibniz "is able to retranslate that difference into a difference within European thinking" (44) on the grounds that "*c'est tout comme ici*" (42). Saussy maintains that Leibniz's peaceful and perhaps facile translation has to sacrifice ontology, the very being of things and cultures: "Once the being has been taken out of being, there is not much left for ontologists to disagree about" (185). With Hegel, however, who conceptualizes China as whatever is *before* the advent of history or art or aesthetics proper, speaking of China is more problematic; he absolutely needs to locate, within his philosophical system of dialectics, the moment of "break" where nonhistory ends and history proper is launched into being, but he also needs to put history and nonhistory in some sort of an interrelation even when he is keeping them apart. If China is sealed off from history, asks Saussy, "How can historical reason talk about it, if the usual historical categories (first among them change) do not apply?" (159). Thus to speak of China as nonhistory or stasis, as pure nature or space without temporality, but also as a category in the philosophy of history, becomes a catachresis that threatens each moment to undo the entire Hegelian discourse on history, nature, and aesthetics. Hegel's problem is "the lack of a language in which to name China, univocally, both as itself [that is, nonhistory] and as something that can be brought into relation with history" (183). From a theoretical point of view, such a deconstructive reading of Hegel is more subtle and more effective than the usual charge of Hegelian Eurocentrism or ethnocentrism because the critique is theoretical rather than referential or historical. Saussy disproves the very Hegelian discourse on China rather than proving that Hegel got some historical facts wrong in talking about China.

Historical perspective illuminates the theoretical issues as well. By connecting contemporary debate on the question of allegory in Chinese literature with the seventeenth-century rites controversy in the Catholic Church and European philosophy, Saussy shows how sinology inherits many of the basic problems from its missionary beginning three hundred years ago and advances a powerful, cogent critique of cultural relativism and skepticism that continue to separate, just as the Catholic purists did, the East and the West in an absolute polarity. The argument of some sinologists that no allegory, metaphor, or fictionality exists in Chinese poetry is revealed to rest on

the same polemical basis as the Catholic purist theology and its argument that the Chinese language lacks a word for God and the Chinese mind lacks an understanding of spirituality. To claim that one has recognized the fundamental difference between the East and the West presumes that one already "knows something about other varieties of metaphysics, philosophy, and so forth, and wants to underline a contrast; or knows enough about 'Western civilization' to have seen around it and knows its limits" (6–7). That argument proves to be an intellectual hubris since it "requires making even stronger epistemic claims than does naïveté" (10) and since it proclaims, overconfidently, to have known both the East and the West as incompatible entities, which are only hyperbolic simplifications. Saussy's critique of skepticism and relativism clearly shows the power and sophistication of a superb critical mind and makes an important contribution to the ongoing debate on understanding different literatures, cultures, and societies. It is one of the many valuable insights this excellent book has to offer, and it will challenge our conventional notions and received opinions about the East and the West and about cross-cultural understanding.

Since allegory says one thing and means another, traditional commentaries on the Chinese classic, the *Book of Odes*, are eminently allegorical, because they translate the language of poetry into that of exemplary morality and politics. Many Chinese and Western scholars have criticized those allegorical commentaries as mistranslations that bend the text to fit into the Procrustean bed of Confucian moral and political philosophy. Modern readers typically read the *Book of Odes* as plain ancient folk songs distorted by traditional commentators into moral and political preachings. In the two central chapters, however, Saussy questions the autonomy of an aesthetic text and its self-sufficient meaning yet gives full credit to traditional commentaries as a performative mode of reading that turns poetry into a normative text, one of exemplary history or an exemplary moral and political order. Whereas modern scholars protest traditional commentators' use of poetry for moral and political allegorization, Saussy doubts that one can differentiate the use of poetry from its meaning. In ancient China, lines from the *Book of Odes* were often quoted out of context to express the intent of whoever quoted them in diplomatic meetings, in such cases, Saussy argues, "it becomes pointless, or at least the mark of a stubborn essentialism in linguistics, to ask what the meaning is as opposed to the use" (65). That may be true, but one may also credit Chinese poetics with an aesthetic consciousness beyond the level of what Saussy calls the ancient "poetics of quotation" (64). Since the Great Preface, as he acknowledges, already "interprets the familiar 'Poetry expresses intent' of the *Book of Documents* as a statement about poetic meaning, not about the uses to which poetry might be put" (86), one may argue that the differentiation of the meaning from

the use of poetic lines out of context is not a modern agenda and that it is fair enough to judge the work of traditional commentators by the standard they themselves have set. Here I am baffled by Saussy's refusal to distinguish between meaning and use, the literal and the figurative, creating a new poem and quoting an existent one, and so forth, and by his argument that a poem, "like a proverb or a single long word" (65), does not acquire meaning until it is made use of in a linguistic construction. To be sure, words as dictionary entries need to be put in a linguistic construction to have specific meanings, but a poem is already such a construction. It is precisely the constructedness of meaning, I believe, that makes traditional commentaries so appealing to Saussy, who does not care for easy gains but sets a high value on "work," on "the manufacture of meaning," and on "expenditures of labor" (119). In this Chinese *querelle des anciens et des modernes*, he clearly sides with the ancients for love of their strong and laborious interpretations, their commitment to making texts into fables of moral and political exemplarity. I only wish to suggest that the modern effort to "save the text" from the commentary tradition is also strongly motivated and that its aesthetics is every bit as entangled, as traditional commentaries were, with the idea of exemplarity in politics as well as in history.

In *The Challenge of Comparative Literature*, Claudio Guillén maintains that East-West comparative studies are most valuable and promising when theoretical problems rather than actual contacts and influence form the ground for comparison. Covering a wide range of theoretical and historical issues with a high level of critical sophistication, Saussy's book sets a wonderful example of precisely that kind of study. Innovative, brilliant, and elegantly written, it will soon make its impact felt in the study of Chinese and comparative literature.

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Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England. By Harold Love. Oxford: Clarendon, 1993. xii + 379 pp. £40.00.

In 1968 Harold Love published *The Penguin Book of Restoration Verse* in which he seems to have been imagining already the important study here under review. Spurred on perhaps by possibilities of tercentenary publication, editorial scholars working on Restoration poetry were active during the 1960s: in addition to Love's anthology, I am thinking of David Vieth's *Attribution in Restoration Poetry* (1963), his edition of Rochester's poems (1968), early volumes of the California *Dryden* (1956–), and the seven magnificent Yale *Poems on Affairs of State* volumes (1963–1971). Amid this editorial activity, Love identified the need for a general study of scribal publication in the